

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. Only the FCC can forestall or force balance on the situation. Either stop the broadcast or require the Sinclair Syndicate to air "Fahrenheit 9/11" in a comparable time slot prior to the election with an equivalent amount of media build-up advertising the coming of this event. This is the only way to provide a fair and balanced presentation of such so-called "news".

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line (or other agendas) and less of what we need for our democracy. It is vitally important that the FCC - as the regulating body - enforce the fact that Sinclair must meet these standard and provide our community (KDNL, Channel 30, St. Louis, MO) with more substantive news about issues that matter, rather than partisan diatribes that detract from a factual public discourse regarding our democracy and the people participating in the electoral processes.

There is no substitute for common sense and common sense sees this as a thinly veiled effort to attempt to derail the Kerry campaign at a late date when slander and out right lies can frame a reality that cannot be rebutted in the time left (eg., the Swift Boat adds). This is not only disreputable, but illegal and in violation of the FCC charter they hold. Sinclair's past actions and promoted future actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. The PUBLIC deserves better. If Sinclair proceeds without providing clear balance, they should be denied the right to continue to SERVE the PUBLIC at the next renewal of their license. Their bandwidth should be turned over to others that will have the PUBLIC Interest at heart.

Thank you.

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